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NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

PREPARATION OF PRIVATE HOUSES FOR OPERATIONS.—This paper in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* contains many useful hints for nurses. Except for abdominal operations, carpets or rugs need not be taken up. Thick layers of newspapers covered with a 1-1000 bichloride sheet are sufficient protection. The sheets protecting the walls near the operating table can be fastened up with glass-headed push pins, less defacing to paint or plaster than tacks. The top of the table should be thickly padded to prevent backache after operation.

For the lithotomy position an excellent leg-holder can be improvised by tying a rolled sheet about one knee, passing it back over one shoulder and out under the other, to relieve pressure on the neck, and fastening it above the other knee. Make knots on outside of leg. If the Trendelenburg position is necessary, an ordinary kitchen table can be utilized by raising two legs on blocks, or bricks, or, if needed, on the seats of two chairs.

An open towel, hung on the hook that suspends the douche-bag, draping the bag, prevents the walls from being splashed. A large alcohol lamp, placed in the bath tub to minimize danger, with an upper tray sterilizer or basin, serves for boiling instruments. For abdominal operations, dressings should be steam sterilized. If moist dressings, these should be finished last, so as to be warm instead of cold and clammy. Sheets and towels, after being freshly laundered, should be ironed with a very hot iron. Baking is of no use unless carried to the scorching point. Rubber gloves must be folded flat in gauze or a towel and boiled. Rolled in a ball the inside is not sterilized. For sterile water, the clothes boiler full, containing also three pitchers and a dipper with a hooked handle, is boiled the night before. The pitchers are hooked out of the water with the handle of the dipper, filled, towels tied over the tops, and set aside. Next morning the boiler is refilled and the dipper boiled again. This gives a supply of hot and cold sterile water.

In an emergency, freshly-sterilized water can be cooled in a reasonably short time by pouring cold water over the outside of the pitchers containing it.

GREEK NURSES.—*The Interstate Medical Journal* says that previous to 1872 the nursing of the sick was practiced only by the humblest class in Greece. About this time Queen Olga, who is a sister of Alexandra, Queen Mother of England, established a society which incidentally led to the training and instruction of nurses. A text-book was written for them in 1875, a splendid modern hospital opened in 1884, and the training went on apace. Now the high standard of education and refinement is noticeable.

DIET IN URTICARIA.—A German medical journal says the two classes of food to be avoided in urticaria are proteids and leguminous vegetables, peas, beans, etc. The patient should have tea, or coffee, well sweetened, bouillon, lemon juice, grape juice, coarse bread with plenty of butter, rice, farina, cereals, lettuce, potatoes, raw and stewed fruits. More nutrition should be secured by a liberal supply of sugar and butter.

COLDS.—In a paper on this subject in *The Medical Record* it is stated that an acute coryza is primarily due to the effect of an excess of moisture in the air. The excessive nasal secretion at the beginning relieves the respiratory apparatus and prevents an overcharge of moisture there which would damage it. It is analogous to perspiration. Microbes are rarely the primary cause of acute coryza. If germs are present in the nasal cavity an inflammatory catarrhal condition may develop, the germ finding a hot bed for growth in the inflamed mucous membrane. As to treatment, Dr. Jacobi advises abstinence from fluids and enforced diaphoresis. Adrenalin spray is of some use.

IMPORTANCE OF THE TONSILS.—*The Journal of the American Medical Association* in a synopsis of a paper in a German contemporary, emphasizes the importance of the tonsils in the human economy. A strong current of lymph setting into the tonsils is an important element of health. If this current is obstructed by effete matter, the system suffers. Squeezing the tonsils with a suction apparatus is advised to clear the ducts and stimulate a healthy circulation of lymph. Joint troubles and other local and general disturbances have been improved by this means. Cleansing the tonsils may improve a bad odor of the breath. In a case of incipient measles the application of the suction apparatus to apparently sound tonsils and the aspiration of considerable pus reduced the swelling of the face and eyes almost immediately. Treatment to reduce the tendency to chronic inflammation and to restore the functioning of the tonsils should be instituted. Tonsillectomy should be a last resort.

TREATMENT OF SCIATICA.—*The Journal of the American Medical Association* reports the treatment of eight cases of sciatica by means of hypodermic injections of quinin and urea hydrochlorid in a normal

salt solution. The injections gave almost immediate relief. They were also used successfully for two cases of facial neuralgia.

SKIN GRAFTING.—*The Medical Record* reports the use of aluminum leaf, instead of silver leaf, in skin grafting. It did not go to pieces when sterilized. The top of the granulations were merely shaved and the grafts applied; they took in every case treated.

OIL OF ORANGE IN ANESTHESIA.—*The Journal of Michigan State Medical Association* says that when the ether used in anesthesia is combined with oil of orange the patient may be anesthetized with less discomfort, with no preliminary stage of excitement, and with the consumption of about one-half the quantity of ether that is otherwise required. There is also a speedy recovery from the anesthetic state without nausea, or vomiting. Essential oil of orange inhibits certain nasal reflexes, and suppresses the reflexes of dilatation of the lungs and stomach. The patient inhales the oil of orange from the ordinary mask for about three minutes before the ether is given. When the ether vapor is commenced it is combined with the oil of orange vapor in the proportion of one ounce of the essential oil and one ounce of water contained in a separate bottle that is connected with the ether vaporizer.

EFFICIENCY IN NURSING.—In a paper in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* Dr. W. Gilman Thompson discusses some problems connected with nursing. Architects should consider the making easy the accomplishment of the maximum of work with the minimum of effort by the nurses. Pantries, lavatories, clothes closets, etc., should be grouped so as to economize steps. In one ward a nurse had to drag screens, weighing 93 pounds, a distance of 480 feet, each time they were used about a certain bed. In another, she walked 364 feet to bring a patient a glass of water, return and disinfect the glass. He urges that the comfort of the patient should not be sacrificed to the appearance of the ward. Things required to make a patient comfortable should be kept within easy reach of the bed, so as to be used whenever necessary. Back rests and foot rests, commodes, leg cradles, in medical wards, cranes over the beds, to permit bed-ridden sufferers to assist themselves, water coolers, bed tables, for use in bed, and other appliances which contribute to the comfort of the patient should be a part of the furniture of the ward. If they cannot be arranged to preserve a perfect uniformity, let the uniformity go. The comfort of the patients is of far more importance than the exact alignment of the ward. He severely remarks that he is unable to recall a single suggestion originating with the officers of a school designed to promote the comfort of patients in bed. No doubt there have been many such, for all nurses know that ease of body is a potent factor in the welfare of the sick.